

The Circuit Writer



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CIRCUMSPICE! LOOK AROUND YOU!

by Dr. Henry L. Lambdin
after looking at one annual conference for 70 years

Come June 1981, Northern New Jersey Conference will gather for its 124th session. Its 125th year of making history will then ensue. How and where do you find history? Dr. J. T. Shotwell's way of answering this question appeals to me. Shotwell took Sir Christopher Wren's epitaph in St. Paul's, London, "Si monumentum requiris, circumspice," i.e., "If you seek his monument, look around you," and substituted "historiam" for monumentum. "To find history, you need but one first and final instruction, CIRCUMSPICE! LOOK AROUND YOU." Two corollary counsels could be added: "If what you are doing is worth doing well, it is worth recording;" and "There are no uninteresting things, there are only uninterested people," this latter by Gilbert Chesterton. Why anniversary? To look around us for overlooked, belittled, misinterpreted, unutilized history made by our spiritual ancestors and also by our none too spiritual selves, and thereby become better equipped to teach people, show them how to redirect their lives, train them toward better living, and how to build one another up in the disciplined fellowship of the Church of the Living God.

Circumspice! Look around you - and what do you find is missing? I'll start with an unpardonable omission. Of the thousands of Class Leaders who nourished and guided local Methodist Churches throughout this land for 100 years, there is not extant one diary or journal similar to the Memoirs of Carvosso. What record have we of good Methodist Christians in Northern New Jersey adequate for preparing an interesting biography? A finely cultured friend of 60 years said to me, "When I was a girl in Newark, the name of Edith Fredericks was a household word. Her work in China made missions vital to us." The story of James M. Buckley, born in a parsonage in Rahway, who had but one year of college yet became one of this country's noted editors, a lively participant in the Morristown Methodist Church, the N.Y. East Conference, many General Conferences and innumerable debates on national issues has never been adequately interpreted. Buckley's friend and parishioner, George I. Seney, founder of the Brooklyn Methodist Hospital was at one time called the first citizen of New York City. When I asked Chester Marshall, superintendent of the hospital, some years ago if there was any book about Seney's life and work, He said "No, but if you will write one I want the first copy." George T. Cobb was the greatest mayor that Morristown ever had, said Mayor Manahan a century after Cobb's death. Cobb realized that a town needs not only schools but a library, a cemetery, and churches. He gave the land for not only the library and cemetery but for a school and for the Methodist church. Books have been written about men whose service to the common good was far less significant than Cobb's was.

But besides men and women in a Conference there have been large and alas, divisive issues. While my simple mind has never been able to find a sufficient

reason for setting Religious Education and Evangelism in antagonist relationship, I have listened to debates on this subject for more than six decades. Regardless of one's personal bias - if one admits to a bias - here is a story worth telling in concrete reminiscent terms if someone can be found to tell it. - I would maintain that the same sort of research and critical evaluation of the resolutions on Social Concerns or Issues taken by our Annual Conference is needed for any forthcoming History of Northern New Jersey Conference. The foregoing are but a few of the fields that are white unto harvest for Conference historians. CIRCUMSPICE! LOOK AROUND YOU!

CONFERENCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY REORGANIZED

See enclosed letter from Dr. Robert D. Simpson.

ANNUAL DINNER MEETING

Tuesday May 12, 1981

The annual dinner meeting of the newly reorganized historical society of the Northern New Jersey Annual Conference will be held in the Madison Church on Tuesday evening May 12, 1981. Details on program, exact time and information on making reservations will be in the mail soon. Mark the date on your calendar now and plan to join us!

LOCAL CHURCH HISTORY CONTEST - Awards to be presented during 1981 Conference Session

Six local churches - Lyndhurst, Midland Park, Orange, Oxford, Parsippany, and Somerville--have submitted histories of their local churches published during the calendar year 1980 for our eighth annual LOCAL HISTORY RECOGNITION CONTEST. Two awards will be presented during the 1981 session of the Annual Conference in June.

If your church plans to publish a history of your local church in 1981, we urge you to enter it in next year's contest now. Large or small, pamphlet or cloth bound, mimeographed or printed, all histories printed during 1981 are eligible. Each history will become part of the Conference's permanent collection. MAIL ONE COPY TO: Dr. Kenneth E. Rowe, Drew University Library, Madison, N.J. 07940 by February 1, 1982.

RETIRED AND RETIRING PASTORS

Have you made your tape of reminiscences and your very best sermon for the Conference Archives? If not, contact Paul Spiecker, Clifton, for details. Phone: 684-4816.

TRAVELING EXHIBIT ON BISHOP FRANCIS ASBURY

A small exhibit of Asbury memorabilia from the collection of Drew University is available on request for use at special celebrations in local churches. The exhibit includes several mounted prints and photographs, a set of ordination certificates signed by our first Bishop, along with a pair of spectacles he wore. When used with historical items from a local congregation, this makes an attractive addition to an anniversary or other historical observation. Contact Dr. Kenneth E. Rowe, Drew University Library, Madison, N.J. 07940. Telephone: 377-3000, Ext. 470.

CELEBRATING THE HERITAGE:

- KINGWOOD Pulpit Rock, outside site of historic Kingwood church, frequently visited by Bishop Francis Asbury, was recently visited by Southern District Superintendent Dean Lanning during Kingwood Church's annual anniversary celebrations.
- ORANGE The 150th birthday of the congregation was observed with a special program of events which began on October 23 when Bishop White preached the anniversary sermon. Today the Orange Church consists of four congregations which have merged over the years. In 1954 the Wesley Methodist Church, a Swedish language church on North Clinton Street in East Orange, merged with the Orange Church. In 1962 the West Orange Methodist Church, then located on High Street merged with the present church. And in 1970 the Grace Methodist Church in the downtown section of East Orange "came home" to the Orange church from which it had originated as a mission in 1872. Calvary Church in East Orange had its origin in the Orange Church in 1868, as did the Sanford Street Methodist Church of East Orange which began in 1875. Harold T. Dunlap, historian for the church, has prepared a new history: ONE HUNDRED FIFTY YEARS OF METHODISM IN ORANGE, N.J.: 1830-1980. The Sunday morning worship service of October 26 was the traditional John Wesley Morning Prayer Service. Highlight of this service was recalling the memory of 120 members who had died since the church's 125th anniversary in 1955.
- PEARL RIVER, N.Y. Bishop White preached the festival sermon as the church celebrated its 115th Anniversary on November 23. The renovated chancel, new organ and altar were dedicated.
- STOCKHOLM A large congregation of members and friends gathered October 5 to celebrate the rededication of the building. The classic white frame structure is 154 years old and is literally built "on a rock". The rededication came following a lengthy restoration. The building is included on the state and national list of historic sites. Preaching at the afternoon worship service was the Rev. Dr. Henry L. Lambdin, retired pastor and professor. Dr. Lambdin served as pastor of the Stockholm Congregation 69 years ago, in 1911.
- OTHERS? Please send news of celebrations in your church to the editor.

There is no order blank for supplies and materials which you may wish to purchase from your conference Commission on Archives and History with this issue of the "Circuit Writer" We shall enclose one order blank with the "Circuit Writer" once a year instead of twice a year hereafter. The order blank which was revised on 4/1/80 may be used for any of the historical materials that are listed thereon until the fall issue, when we shall enclose a newly revised order blank.